

Architect: Wexler & Harrison Year Built: 1958

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 3 Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) *Charney Residence*

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: ☐ Not for Publication ☒ Unrestricted

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad

*c. Address *37-127 Marx Road*

*e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number Block: Lot:

*a. County *Riverside*

Date:

City *Rancho Mirage*

Zip *92270*

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)

Designed by architect William Cody circa 1962, the Charney residence is "L"-shaped with a flat roof and deep overhangs supported by square steel posts. The one-story, northwest facing house is sheathed in stucco and T-111 plywood. A long asphalt driveway approaches the house from a private road. Lush landscaping surrounds the house, which is centered on a .85-acre lot on the ninth fairway of the Tamarisk Country Club golf course. The primary, rear elevations surround a swimming pool. Here, floor-to-ceiling fixed and sliding glass windows, many meeting at corners, are framed with aluminum mullions. Smooth concrete is extensively used for the pool deck, covered walkways, and low planter walls adjacent to the house. Sculpted hedges buffer the pool area from the golf course. The house appears mostly original and is in excellent condition with only the walkway ceiling fans as obvious additions.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (list attributes and codes) *HP2. Single-family Property*

*P4. Resources Present: ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object ☐ Site ☐ District ☐ Element of District ☐ Other

P5a. Photo



P5b. Description of Photo: (view and date)

*South elevation
August 2002*

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: ☒ historic
Circa 1962

*P7. Owner and Address:
*Bernard and Jacqueline Schiff
37127 Marx Road
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270*

*P8. Recorded by:
*P. Moruzzi, T. Grimes, L. Heumann
Leslie Heumann and Associates
600 N. Sierra Bonita Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90036*

*P9. Date Recorded:
September 23, 2002

*P10. Survey Type:
Intensive Survey

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none")

None.

*Attachments: ☐ None ☐ Location Map ☐ Sketch Map ☒ Continuation Sheet ☒ Building, Structure, and Object Record
☐ Archaeological Record ☐ District Record ☐ Linear Feature Record ☐ Milling Station Record ☐ Rock Art Record
☐ Artifact Record ☐ Photograph Record ☐ Other (list)

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 3

*NRHP Status Code 3S

*Resource Name or #: *Charney Residence*

B1. Historic Name: *Charney Residence*

B2. Common Name: *Same*

B3. Original Use: *Single-family Residence*

B4. Present Use: *Single-family Residence*

*B5. Architectural Style: *Desert Modern*

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations): *Constructed circa 1962.*

Note: No building permits exist prior to incorporation of the City of Rancho Mirage in 1973.

February 15, 1975. Remodel, new bedroom. Value: \$4,900.

September 24, 1975. Remodel, new bar.

February 18, 1976. Patio.

June 8, 1978. Addition. Value: \$6,000.

May 5, 1980. Reroof.

April 2, 2001. Reroof.

*B7. Moved? ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features: *None.*

B9a. Architect: *William Cody*

b. Builder: *Unknown*

*B10. Significance: Theme *Country Club Era*

Area *Rancho Mirage*

Period of Significance: *1951-1973*

Property Type: *Single-family Residence*

Applicable Criteria: *C*

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity)

The Charney Residence is architecturally significant for its exemplification of the Desert Modern style that Cody helped develop and with which he, along with E. Stewart Williams, became most closely associated. The Desert Modern architectural style incorporates large expanses of floor to ceiling glass sheltered by deep overhangs extending from flat roofs in creating a powerful interaction between the indoors and outdoors. Desert Modern buildings appear light, often supported by thin steel or wood posts, with open interiors flowing from room to room. In addition to glass, exterior materials include stucco, wood, slumpstone, and natural rock. Street elevations are often shielded for privacy with only clerestories providing light. Rear

(See Continuation Sheet 3 of 3.)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) _____

*B12. References:

Alan Hess and Andrew Danish, Palm Springs Weekend, Chronicle Books, 2001.

1961 Palm Springs Directory.

1962 Palm Springs Directory.

Adele Cygelman, Palm Springs Modern, New York, Rizzoli International Publications, 1999. pp. 112-115.

Interview with Robert Marx, October 30, 2002.

City of Rancho Mirage Building Permits.

Sketch Map

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: *Peter Moruzzi, Teresa Grimes, Leslie Heumann*

(This space reserved for official comments.)

*Date of Evaluation: *September 23, 2002*

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____

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Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Charney Residence

*Recorded by P. Moruzzi, T. Grimes, Leslie Heumann

*Date September 23, 2002

☒ Continuation ☐ Update

***B10. Significance (continued):**

elevations embrace desert views and outdoor access. The Desert Modern style grew out of local architects' desire to adapt Modern materials, techniques, and floor plans to the unique requirements of desert living. The Charney Residence carries Desert Modernism close to Mies van der Rohe's interpretation of the International Style. The flat roof with deep overhangs, exceptionally thin steel posts, and walls of glass suggest International Style curtain walls interrupted occasionally by stucco wall panels. In the country club areas of Rancho Mirage the houses are oriented towards the rear for spectacular golf course views. Cody's Charney Residence design provides incomparable outdoor vistas.

William F. Cody FAIA (1916-1978) was born in Dayton, Ohio and raised in Los Angeles. While attending architecture school at the University of Southern California in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Cody was also working for architect Cliff May, gaining experience in the adaptation of ranch and hacienda style houses to modern floor plans and construction techniques. Suffering from asthma, and believing that the Palm Springs area offered opportunity and prominent clients, Cody moved to Palm Springs in 1944-45 and set up practice. One of his first projects, the Del Marcos Hotel of 1946, won an AIA "creditable mention" award as an example of new resort hotel architecture for its "ingenious plan, which appears complicated but is actually orderly and thoughtful." Author and critic Alan Hess writes, "Greater thinness and more striking elegance became the single-minded focus of his ongoing design." Despite a reputation for carousing, Cody was exceptionally focused on the details of his designs and pushing the boundaries of his materials. His well-known and innovative early buildings, along with friendships with influential members of the Thunderbird, Tamarisk, and Eldorado Country Clubs, resulted in commissions to design (or in the case of Thunderbird, remodel) the clubhouses of all three locations. In addition, Cody designed a large number of residences in the country club areas, many along the fairways of the new resort concept of golf course living, a concept that Cody himself helped devise.

Author Adele Cygelman writes, "Joints and door frames seemingly disappeared into walls. He merged living rooms into terraces and gardens. Roofs jutted out twelve feet to shield the walls of glass. Pattern and texture came from tile floors, carved wood panels, and concrete-block screens with geometric motifs, all of which were meticulously designed by Cody to match each other precisely at the seams and angles where the planes met." Like other Coachella Valley architects, Cody designed churches, gas stations, motels, restaurants, offices, a mobile home park, shopping centers, even a carwash. "Yet a distinct character can be seen in all of them," says Hess. "It is a restless energy that brings a liveliness to his plans, elevations and details. The radical thinness of Cody roofs or the daring reach of a cantilever are clearly the result of a wrestling match between the architect and the materials and the laws of physics; that energy and striving remains in the building." Hess concludes, "The fact that Cody could take an established vocabulary and style and reinterpret it so vividly ranks him among the best of mid-century California designers."

The Charney Residence appears eligible for separate listing in the National Register of Historic Places for exceptional significance under Criterion C as a virtually original and intact example of William Cody's Desert Modern design from the early 1960s (a "3S" National Register Status Code). In addition, the property would be eligible for designation under an existing or proposed local ordinance. Of the approximately 21 single-family Cody-designed residences identified as architecturally noteworthy in Rancho Mirage, it is one of only six that appear eligible for listing in the National Register.